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Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015

Estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council

Thematic cluster III: Joint Mission of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the United Nations for the Elimination of the Chemical Weapons Programme of the Syrian Arab Republic

Nineteenth report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015

I. Introduction

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered an advance version of the report of the Secretary-General on estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council (A/68/327/Add.8 and Corr.1). The report contains the proposed resource requirements for the Joint Mission of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the United Nations for the Elimination of the Chemic Weapons Programme of the Syrian Arab Republic for the period from 1 January to 30 June 2014. During its consideration of the report, the Advisory Committee met with representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional information and clarification, concluding with written responses provided on 11 December 2013.

II. Mandate and planning assumptions

2. In paragraphs 1 to 4 of his report, the Secretary-General provides information on the background, mandate and objective of the Joint Mission. As indicated in the report of the Security Council, in its resolution 2118 (2013), authorized an advance

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team of United Nations personnel to provide assistance to OPCW activities in the Syrian Arab Republic, and also requested the Secretary-General to make recommendations regarding the role of the United Nations in eliminating the Syrian chemical weapons programme. The Secretary-General put forward his recommendations in a letter to the Council dated 7 October 2013 (S/2013/591). In a letter dated 11 October 2013 (S/2013/603), the President of the Council informed the Secretary-General that the Council had authorized the establishment of the Joint Mission.

3. In his report, the Secretary-General indicates that three phases of activity have been identified: (a) in the first phase, an initial presence and operating capability in Damascus is to be established; (b) in the second phase, the initial inspections of all Syrian chemical weapons production and storage facilities are to be completed, along with oversight of the destruction by the Syrian Arab Republic of all chemical weapons production equipment; and (c) the third phase is to be dedicated to support, monitoring and verification of the destruction of the Syrian chemical weapons programme. The Secretary-General also indicates that phase I and a majority of phase II activities have been completed by the Joint Mission, and that the phase III implementation process commenced on 1 November 2013.

4. The planning assumptions of the Joint Mission for the period January-June 2014 are set out in paragraphs 8 to 20 of the report. The Secretary-General states that the Joint Mission has currently absorbed the initial advance team and will operate as a single entity under the authority of the Special Coordinator. The Joint Mission will comprise a United Nations component and an OPCW component working in their respective areas of competence. OPCW will serve as the lead technical agency responsible for the verification of the destruction of the Syrian chemical weapons programme. The United Nations will provide support to overall coordination, including international assistance, and liaison with the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and other national and regional actors, security arrangements, logistics, information assessments, communications and outreach, and administration. The Secretary-General indicates that the priorities of the Joint Mission will be to complete mandated tasks by the end of June 2014, in full accordance with the Executive Committee's decision and the Security Council's resolution.

5. The Secretary-General states that the Joint Mission will maintain offices in Damascus and Cyprus, a liaison office in New York, and representation at OPCW headquarters in The Hague. The Special Coordinator will be based in Damascus, but will carry out extensive functions from Cyprus and travel extensively. An Office of the Special Coordinator will be established in Cyprus to provide political advice, liaison, coordination, reporting and administrative functions in support of the Special Coordinator. In addition, a staging area and Support Back Office have been established in Cyprus, which will serve as a training centre for Joint Mission personnel as well as a storage location for logistics and operational equipment, and from which teams travelling to the Syrian Arab Republic to conduct inspection visits will gather and plan their missions. The Support Back Office will provide human resources, finance, administrative and other support services for the Joint Mission from Cyprus. For security and operational expediency reasons, the Joint Mission Support Back Office and Office of the Special Coordinator will be located within the protected area of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) and will be upgraded, as necessary.

6. In addition, the Joint Mission will cooperate with other entities and draw upon: (a) substantive support from the Office of the Chef de Cabinet, the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Field Support, the Department of Safety and Security and the Office for Disarmament Affairs, as well as the World Health Organization and the United Nations Environment Programme; (b) administrative support from the Executive Office of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support; and (c) support from other entities, including the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO), the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) and the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP). The Secretary-General further states that, in the light of the short duration of the mandate of the Joint Mission, a robust Headquarters surge capacity will be necessary from the United Nations and OPCW headquarters in New York and The Hague to ensure immediate and effective operational capabilities.

7. The budget proposal provides for the completion of phase II activities and the full implementation of phase III of the Joint Mission operation over the period 1 January to 30 June 2014. With regard to the requirements of the Joint Mission in terms of assets, the Secretary-General indicates that communications and secure mobility needs will be met through a combination of sources, including transfers from other missions and United Nations reserves, drawings from strategic deployment stocks and donations from Member States. Requirements for vehicles have already been met by donors with the exception of three armoured ambulances. Furthermore, it is envisaged that, during the entire mandated period, fixed-wing aircraft donated by contributing Governments will be used to meet some of the Joint Mission's requirements for aviation capacity for movements between Cyprus and Lebanon, between Cyprus and Latakia (subject to security conditions) and for some missions of the Special Coordinator and senior staff. However, associated costs for fuel, crew accommodation, and landing fees will, in some cases, be covered by the Mission.

8. The Secretary-General indicates that all logistical requirements relating to the removal and destruction of chemical weapons, precursors and all related facilities and any other required procedures of phase III implementation will be funded by the international community. It is expected that either in-kind donations or voluntary contributions to the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic through complementary trust funds administered by OPCW or the Joint Mission will cover associated removal costs. A separate trust fund administered by OPCW will address all external destruction of chemical material once taken outside the country. Moreover, it is expected that the Syrian Arab Republic may require assistance with regard to destruction that will take place within the country.

9. The Secretary-General further indicates that OPCW will be responsible for funding the direct costs of its own personnel, including movements to and from the Mission area (movements within the Mission area will be the responsibility of the United Nations). The details of cost-sharing and other technical integration details are included in a technical agreement which is to be signed by the two organizations.

10. The Secretary-General also states that the Joint Mission will have to ensure the removal of all equipment, either donated to the Mission or provided on loan to the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic, outside the country after completion of the mandated tasks. The Advisory Committee enquired as to whether a similar

policy applied to all missions and requested further details regarding the implications of the policy, given the limited time frame for the mission. It also requested clarification regarding the treatment of computers and vehicles provided by other missions. In response to its query, the Secretariat indicated that the last sentence of paragraph 17 should be amended to read as follows: "It should be noted that the Joint Mission will ensure the removal of equipment, either donated to the Mission, or provided on loan to the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic, outside the country for destruction activity, after completion of the mandated tasks, in line with the terms and conditions under which such donated equipment was provided", and that a corrigendum to the report of the Secretary-General would be issued to reflect the amendment. The Advisory Committee was further informed that the Joint Mission would follow the standard procedures established for the disposition of assets of peacekeeping operations, as set out in Regulation 5.14 of the United Nations Financial Regulations and Rules. **The Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to ensure that the assets of the Joint Mission are disposed of with due regard for all safety precautions, including environmental protection.**

11. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the related resolutions referred to in Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) and mentioned in paragraph 4 of the report of the Secretary-General were Security Council resolutions 1540 (2004) on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and 2042 (2012) and 2043 (2012) on the Middle East.

III. Information on the current period

12. As indicated in paragraph 36 of the report of the Secretary-General, the initial activities of the Joint Mission for the period from October to December 2013 were funded under the commitment authority of the Secretary-General under the provisions of General Assembly resolution 66/249 on unforeseen and extraordinary expenses for the biennium 2012-2013, in the amount of $5,073,300, including for up to 123 positions, which has been reflected in the second performance report for the biennium 2012-2013.

13. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that expenditures incurred to date amounted to approximately $2.6 million, comprising costs for civilian personnel ($0.2 million), official travel ($1.2 million), rental of premises ($0.6 million), miscellaneous services and supplies ($0.4 million) and the acquisition of critical medical, ground transportation, and safety and security equipment ($0.2 million). Of the 123 positions proposed for the mission (75 international and 48 national), 78 were encumbered as of 10 December 2013, including 50 international and 28 national positions. Furthermore, in Damascus, the Joint Mission operated 22 armoured vehicles donated by various Governments; 1 armoured ambulance on loan from the Office of the Joint Special Representative of the United Nations and the League of Arab States for Syria; 1 cargo truck and 1 fuel truck on short-term loan from UNIFIL; and 10 rented vehicles. The Advisory Committee was further informed that it was anticipated that the full allotment provided under the commitment authority of the Secretary-General under the provisions of General Assembly resolution 66/249 on unforeseen and extraordinary expenses for the biennium 2012-2013, in the amount of $5 million, would be spent by the end of 2013.

14. Upon enquiry as to the voluntary contributions, in-kind donations and pledges received to date, the Advisory Committee was informed that voluntary contributions received amounted to $2 million and pledged contributions to $2.65 million. In addition to the above-mentioned donated vehicles, donations in kind, pledged and/or received, included the standby use of a C-130 aircraft until the end of June 2014, the airlift of armoured vehicles, close protection teams and satellite imagery and data. Negotiations on potential additional contributions and donations remained ongoing.

15. The Advisory Committee requested further information on the support provided to the Joint Mission by UNIFIL and UNFICYP. It was informed that UNIFIL provided support to the Joint Mission in the areas of transit services for cargo and personnel through Lebanon, visa application and processing with the Embassy of the Syrian Arab Republic, telecommunications and information technology, maintenance and servicing for ground transportation, and financial services. UNFICYP provided support with regard to procurement, office accommodation, human resources management, travel of staff in the Office of the Special Coordinator and liaison with the Government of Cyprus. The support provided by those missions was on a reimbursable basis.

IV. Resource requirements

16. The proposed requirements for the Joint Mission for the six-month period from 1 January to 30 June 2014 are estimated at $11,822,900 (net of staff assessment), comprising: (a) $4,194,700 under civilian personnel costs to provide for a staffing complement of 123 positions (1 Under-Secretary-General, 1 D-2, 2 D-1, 8 P-5, 13 P-4, 14 P-3, 33 Field Service and 48 Local level positions); and (b) $7,628,200 under operational costs, including provisions for consultants ($44,100), official travel ($1,492,100), facilities and infrastructure ($2,652,400), ground transportation ($993,400), air transportation ($1,153,800), communications ($440,900), information technology ($461,100), medical ($203,100), and other services, supplies and equipment ($187,300) (A/68/327/Add.8 and Corr.1, para. 35).

17. The Advisory Committee was provided with supplementary information containing an organizational chart of the Office of the Special Envoy and further details on staffing proposals which are reflected in the paragraphs below. The requirements for civilian personnel comprise: (a) $3,498,500 to provide for salaries ($2,360,400), common staff costs ($978,100) and danger pay for staff in Damascus ($160,000) for the 75 proposed international positions; and (b) a total amount of $696,200 to provide for salaries ($506,200), common staff costs ($126,400) and danger pay ($63,600) for 48 national staff positions (48 Local level). The proposed requirements reflect vacancy factors of 50 and 30 per cent for international and national staff, respectively. The positions would be distributed among the various locations of the Joint Mission as follows: (a) in the Syrian Arab Republic, 40 international positions (1 USG, 1 D-2, 1 D-1, 3 P-5, 7 P-4, 10 P-3, 17 Field/Security Service) and 33 national positions; (b) in Cyprus, 27 international positions (4 P-5, 3 P-4, 4 P-3, 16 Field/Security Service) and 15 local positions; (c) in New York, 7 international positions; and (d) in The Hague, 1 international position.

18. For the substantive component of the Joint Mission, a total of 36 positions are proposed for the Office of the Special Coordinator, which comprises the following proposed offices/units:

(a) An immediate Office of the Special Coordinator with a total number of 10 positions, comprising 2 in Damascus and 8 in Cyprus, as follows:

- The Special Coordinator (Under-Secretary-General), based in Damascus
- One Senior Public Information Officer (P-5), based in Damascus
- One Special Assistant/Political Affairs Officer (P-5), based in Cyprus
- One Political Affairs/Liaison Officer (P-4), based in Cyprus
- One Special Assistant (P-3), based in Cyprus
- One Senior Staff Assistant (Field Service), based in Cyprus
- Two Field Security Assistants (2 Local level), based in Cyprus
- One Team Assistant (1 Local level), based in Cyprus
- One Light Vehicle Driver (1 Local level), based in Cyprus

(b) An Office of the Deputy Head of Mission based in Damascus, to be co-located with the Office of the Chief of Staff/Deputy Head of Mission, comprising the Deputy Head of Mission (funded by OPCW) and one Administrative Assistant (Field Service), responsible for assisting the Deputy Head of Mission;

(c) An Office of the Chief of Staff/Deputy Head of Mission co-located with the Office of the Deputy Head of Mission, comprising a total number of 11 positions in Damascus:

- One Chief of Staff/Deputy Head of Mission (D-2)
- One Senior Liaison Officer (P-5)
- One Liaison Officer (P-4)
- One Political Affairs Officer (P-4)
- One Information Analyst (P-3)
- One Information Management Officer (P-3)
- One Coordination Officer (P-3)
- One Administrative Assistant (Field Service)
- One Protocol Assistant (Local level)
- One Public Information Assistant (Local level)
- One Driver (Local level)

(d) A Donor Coordination/Advisory Cell based in Cyprus comprising the following 6 positions:

- One Senior External Relations Officer (P-5)
- One Senior Coordination Officer (P-5)
- One Senior Political Affairs Officer (P-5)
- One Trust Fund Budget Officer (P-4)
- One Light Vehicle Driver (Local level)

- One Team Assistant (Local level)

(e) A Liaison Office in New York comprising 7 positions, as follows:

- One Director (D-2)
- One Principal Political Affairs Officer (D-1)
- One Senior Political Affairs Officer (P-5)
- One Coordination Officer (P-4)
- One Planning Officer (P-4)
- Two Team Assistants (2 General Service (Other level))

(f) A liaison function in The Hague, with one Planning Officer (P-4) position for a focal point responsible for sharing information between OPCW and the United Nations.

19. The security component of the Joint Mission would comprise 24 positions, of which 11 are proposed to be based in Damascus and 13 in Cyprus, as follows:

- One Chief Security Officer (P-4), based in Damascus
- One Deputy Chief Security Officer (P-3), based in Damascus
- One Security Officer (P-3), based in Damascus
- Two Field Security Coordination Officers (2 Field Service), based in Damascus
- Two Close Protection Officers (2 Field Service), based in Damascus
- Four Field Security Assistants (4 Local level), based in Damascus
- One Security Officer (P-3), based in Cyprus
- One Field Security Coordination Officer (1 Field Service), based in Cyprus
- Ten Close Protection Officers (10 Field Service), based in Cyprus
- One Security Assistant (Local level), based in Cyprus

20. A total of 63 positions are proposed for the support component, as follows:

(a) An Office of the Chief of Mission Support with a total of 9 positions comprising 5 positions in Damascus and 4 in Cyprus, as follows:

- One Chief of Mission Support (D-1), based in Damascus
- One Planning Officer (P-4), based in Damascus
- Two Interpreters (P-3), based in Damascus
- One Administrative Assistant (Field Service), based in Damascus
- One Administrative Officer (P-4), based in Cyprus
- One Training Officer (P-3), based in Cyprus
- One Administrative Assistant (Local level), based in Cyprus
- One Light Vehicle Driver (Local level), based in Cyprus

(b) An Office of Administrative Services with 15 positions, comprising 8 in Damascus and 7 in Cyprus:

- Two Administrative Officers (1 P-4, 1 P-3), based in Damascus
- One Administrative Assistant (Local level), based in Damascus
- One Human Resources Officer (Field Service), based in Damascus
- One Human Resources Assistant (Local level), based in Damascus
- One Human Resources Officer (Field Service), based in Cyprus
- Two Human Resources Assistants (1 Field Service, 1 Local level), based in Cyprus
- One Travel Assistant (Local level), based in Cyprus
- One Budget and Finance Officer (P-3), based in Cyprus
- One Budget Assistant (Field Service), based in Cyprus
- One Finance Assistant (Field Service), based in Damascus
- One Finance Assistant (Local level), based in Cyprus
- One Medical Officer (P-4), based in Damascus
- One Nurse (Field Service), based in Damascus

(c) An Office of Integrated Support Services comprising 39 positions, of which 35 are based in Damascus and 4 in Cyprus:

- One Chief of Technical Services (P-5), based in Damascus
- One Logistics Officer (P-3), based in Damascus
- One Logistics Assistant (Local level), based in Damascus
- One Supply Assistant (Local level), based in Damascus
- One Facilities Management Assistant (Local level), based in Damascus
- Two Property Management Assistants (1 Field Service, 1 Local level), based in Damascus
- Three Air Operations Assistants (1 Field Service, 2 Local level), based in Cyprus
- One Logistics Team Assistant (Local level), based in Cyprus
- One Movement Control Officer (P-4), based in Damascus
- One Movement Control Assistant (Field Service), based in Damascus
- Two Transport Assistants (1 Field Service, 1 Local level), based in Damascus
- Sixteen Light Vehicle Drivers (16 Local level), based in Damascus
- One Chief Information Systems Officer (P-3), based in Damascus
- Three Information Systems Assistants (2 Field Service, 1 Local level), based in Damascus

- Two Communications Assistants (1 Field Service, 1 Local level), based in Damascus
- Two Networking Assistants (1 Field Service, 1 Local level), based in Damascus

21. **The Advisory Committee recognizes the complexity of the Mission as well as the additional constraints it faces arising from the compressed time frame for the implementation of its mandate and its short duration, as well as the joint structure of the Mission. Nevertheless, the Committee is of the view that, in general, the proposed resources, in particular, the proposed staffing requirements, appear to be high. The Advisory Committee is of the view that the functions of the following positions could be performed within the remaining proposed capacity in their respective offices and therefore recommends against their approval:**

(a) **One Trust Fund Budget Officer position (P-4) proposed in the Donor Coordination/Advisory Cell based in Cyprus;**

(b) **One Senior Political Affairs Officer (P-5) and one Team Assistant (General Service (Other level)) proposed in the Liaison Office in New York.**

The proposed additional requirements under operational costs related to the establishment of the above three positions should be adjusted accordingly.

22. The proposed requirements for staff and operational costs could not be adjusted to take into account the above recommendations of the Advisory Committee in time for the issuance of the present report. **The Advisory Committee therefore requests the Secretary-General to provide the adjusted requirements to the General Assembly at the time of its consideration of this item.**

23. The Committee sought clarification and further justification regarding many issues concerning the Joint Mission, including, inter alia: the rationale behind the structure of the Joint Mission and the requirements for a presence in four locations; the rationale underlying the distribution of security personnel, in particular the need for a large presence at the office in Cyprus which is co-located with UNFICYP; and details on the proposed requirements for travel of staff, air transportation and ground transportation. However, the Committee received the report of the Secretary-General very late in its session and was not in a position to conduct a detailed examination of all the proposals. **The Advisory Committee therefore recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to report comprehensively on resource utilization in the performance report.**

24. The Advisory Committee notes that, in addition to the resources proposed in the report of the Secretary-General, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons will be responsible for funding the direct costs of its own personnel and that logistical requirements relating to the removal and destruction of chemical weapons and other required procedures of phase III implementation will be funded by the international community through in-kind donations or voluntary contributions (see paras. 8 and 9 above). **The Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to provide in the performance report, for information purposes, an overview of the totality of the resources made available to the Joint Mission for the implementation of its mandate.**

25. **Furthermore, while noting that the proposed estimates for staffing requirements are based on high vacancy rates (see para. 17 above), the Advisory Committee is of the view that, given the short duration of the mission, consideration could have been given to presenting a streamlined staffing structure based on an assessment of the personnel that can realistically be brought on board and become operational during the time frame of the operation of the Mission. The Committee recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to analyse the lessons learned in this regard, and to refine, as appropriate, current practice for estimating requirements for missions with characteristics similar to those of the Joint Mission.**

V. Conclusions and recommendations

26. **Subject to its observations and recommendations in the paragraphs above, the Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly:**

(a) **Approve the budget of the Joint Mission of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the United Nations for the Elimination of the Chemical Weapons Programme of the Syrian Arab Republic for the period up to 30 June 2014;**

(b) **Approve a charge of the corresponding amount against the provision requested under section 3, Political affairs, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015.**